



## Effective Techniques for communicating and managing communication

### How do we communicate?



**Spoken:** There are two components to spoken communication.

- **Verbal:** This is what you are saying.
- **Paraverbal:** This means how you say it – your tone, speed, pitch, and volume.


**Non-Verbal:** These are the gestures and body language that accompany your words. Some examples: arms folded across your chest, tracing circles in the air, tapping your feet, or having a hunched-over posture.

**Written:** Communication can also take place via fax, e-mail, or written word

*One of the key elements of good communication is to have good listening skills*



### Who's listening?



There are three factors regarding communication that we need to consider.


- **Method:** The method in which the communicator shares his or her message is important as it has an effect on the message itself. Face to face or over the phone? Can it be done online?
- **Mass:** The number of people receiving the message. This could be between one and millions.
- **Audience:** The person or people receiving the message affect the message, too. Their understanding of the topic and the way in which they receive the message can affect how it is interpreted and understood.

### What is communication?

**Dictionary –**  
"the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs."

**Also defined as –**  
"means of sending messages, orders, etc., including telephone, telegraph, radio, and television,"

### Paraverbal Communication Skills



Paraverbal communication refers to the messages that we transmit through the tone and pacing of our voices. It is *how we say something*, not *what we say*.

For example say out loud the following phrase three times, each time emphasise the word highlighted.

- I didn't **say** you were stupid - (implying they never said it)
- I didn't say **you** were stupid - (implying they were talking about someone else)
- I didn't say you were **stupid** - (implying you got it wrong, followed by an insult)

Some points to remember about our paraverbal communication:

- When we are angry or excited, our speech tends to become more rapid and higher pitched.
- When we are bored or feeling down, our speech tends to slow and take on a monotone quality.
- When we are feeling defensive, our speech is often abrupt.

## Paraverbal Communication Skills



The power of pitch  
The power of tone  
Vocal speed camera

## Listening Skills

Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact on your job effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others

- We listen to obtain information.
- We listen to understand.
- We listen for enjoyment.
- We listen to learn



## Non-verbal Communication Skills

Your manager asks you to step into her office to discuss application for promotion



- Non-verbal body language description 1 - She looks stern and her arms are crossed.
- Non-verbal body language description 2 - She is smiling and looks relaxed.
- Non-verbal body language description 3 - Doesn't lift her head as she calls from her desk.
- Non-verbal body language description 4 - As you walk in she slams the door behind you

Body language can also mean different things across different genders and cultures

## 10 ways to listen better

1. When your listening... LISTEN
2. Avoid interruptions
3. Spend 90% of time listening and 10% talking
4. When you talk, make sure it is related
5. Do not offer advice unless asked for it
6. Limit noise and distractions.. Make it a listening environment
7. Do not let note-taking disturb the flow of conversation
8. Keep eye contact
9. Summarise the conversation
10. Turn your body towards the person

## Body Language Speaks its own Language



## Understand active listening

1. Pay attention
2. Show that you are listening
3. Provide feedback
4. Defer judgement
5. Respond appropriately

Send positive signals such as .....  
head nodding, interested facial expressions, uh-huh, mm-hmmm, ask questions

## Ask open questions



When possible, use the five W's or the H to ask a question

- Who, what, when, where, why, how???

Some useful questions include:

- What happened?
- Why do you feel that way?
- When did this problem start?
- How does that make you feel?
- Who else is involved?

## Probing Questions



When you need more information, ask more questions for:

- Clarification
- Completeness and correctness
- Relevance
- Drilling Down
- Evaluation
- Emotional
- Summarising

## Closed questions



**Definition:** There are two definitions that are used to describe closed questions. A common definition is:

*"A closed question can be answered with either a single word or a short phrase".*

Closed questions have the following characteristics:

- They give you *facts*.
- They are easy to answer.
- They are quick to answer.
- They keep control of the conversation with the questioner.

## Precipitating Factors

Something that you need to consider is the mood of the person you wish to communicate with. We have all had good and bad days, on a particularly good day; everything may go your way and make you feel like you're on top of the world. But on a bad day, unfortunate events can likewise snowball, increasing their negative effect exponentially.

## Closed questions – Useful



Usage	Example
As opening questions in a conversation, as it makes it easy for the other person to answer, and doesn't force them to reveal too much about themselves.	It's great weather, isn't it? Where do you live? What time is it?
For testing their understanding (asking yes/no questions). This is also a great way to break into a long ramble.	So, you want to move into our apartment, with your own bedroom and bathroom?
For setting up a desired positive or negative frame of mind in them (asking successive questions with obvious answers either yes or no).	Are you happy with your current supplier? Do they give you all that you need? Would you like to find a better supplier?
For achieving closure of a persuasion (seeking yes to the big question).	If I can deliver this tomorrow, will you sign for it now?

## Common Ground

Finding common ties can be a powerful communication tool. Think of those times when a stranger turns out not to be a stranger – that the person next to you on the train grew up in the same town that you did, or that the co-worker you never really liked enjoys woodworking as much as you do.



## THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Before we get to creating documents, we need to cover some fundamentals. Master these, and you will be able to construct the most common business documents.



## Grammar



- Subject-verb agreement
- Verb tenses
- It's and its

## Spelling and Grammar

It is surprising how often certain words are misspelled or misused in everyday business.



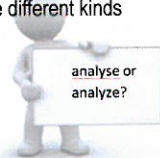
## Language and Tone

Words and language are the most important component of your writing. You don't need a fabulous vocabulary or a great turn of phrase, but you *must* use the words properly – and not too many of them.



## Spelling

- Familiarise yourself with commonly misused words.  
*Example: Affect vs. Effect*
- Make sure you pronounce words properly.
- Note some friendly rules on spelling.
- If you're writing for an international audience, note that there are spelling variations in the different kinds of English.
- Use spelling resources.



## Clarity

- Don't use long words or phrases where short ones will do.
- Avoid tautologies.
- Avoid clichés like the plague.....
- Use active rather than passive voice where possible.



## Conciseness

Keep your language simple, don't use long words just for the sake of it.

You are not writing an English essay where you have to impress your teacher with your vocabulary.



## Tone

The tone of your document is also important.

You want to be positive, and appreciative of your audience.

You need to keep it business-focused, not too casual.



## Formality

Keep your document as formal as is required.

Generally you will assess the degree of formality based on:

- ❖ The seniority of your primary audience,
- ❖ The gravity of the situation, and
- ❖ The type of relationship.



## Sentences and Paragraphs

This is a brief refresher on the parts of a sentence and proper punctuation and paragraphs.



## Focus

Your document is generally about a single topic.

Inform your audience *as soon as possible* what that topic is.

The first sentence is a good place.



## Parts of a Sentence

"The project manager recommends a delay."

The subject is 'The project manager', the predicate is 'recommends', the object is 'a delay'.



## Sentence Length

Before	After
High quality learning environments are a necessary precondition for facilitation and enhancement of the ongoing learning process.	Children need good schools if they are to learn properly.
If there are any points on which you require explanation or further particulars we shall be glad to furnish such additional details as may be required by telephone.	If you have any questions, please phone.
It is important that you shall read the notes, advice and information detailed opposite then complete the form overleaf (all sections) prior to its immediate return to the Council by way of the envelope provided.	Please read the notes opposite before you fill in the form. Then send it back to us as soon as possible in the envelope provided.

## Organisation and Structure



## Punctuation

- Period/full stop (.) – used to end a sentence.
- Question Mark (?) – used after a question.
- Exclamation Point (!) – used after statements with emotion.
- Comma (,) – used to separate items in a series.
- Colon (:) – used to mean "note what follows."
- Apostrophe (') – used to show possessive case, or to indicate the omission of letters in a word.
- Semicolon (;) – used to link independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction.



## Organisation Approach

- Determine the purpose of your document.
- Consider your key messages.
- Consider the other information you must include.
- Consider the use of diagrams/graphs/pictures/tables.
- Work out the structure of your document.
- Organise your material into the relevant sections.
- Structure your material in a logical manner.
- Start writing.



## Paragraphs

A good, well-thought out paragraph structure can make a significant difference to the reader's perception and understanding of your document.



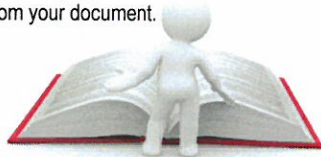
## Tools and Techniques





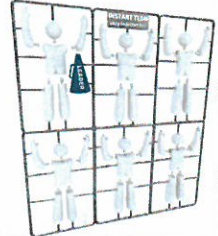
## The Reader

The reader is the most important participant in this whole exercise. You need to be aware of who they are/ are likely to be, and of what is going to be important *to them* from your document.



## Templates

Your organisation may have templates for various types of document. A template is a pre-defined structure. It can vary from a simple Table of Contents through to a detailed explanation of the content expected in each section.



## The Requirement

Are you crystal clear about *why* you are writing this document? The Reader section discusses the reader's perspective, but what about yours/your organisation's/your boss's?



## Proof Reading

Once you have completed your document, you need to proofread and review/edit it. You may need to adjust your schedule so that your document gets proofread, reviewed and despatched in time.



## Write faster – effective writing

- ✦ Avoid long sentences and paragraphs.
- ✦ You don't always have to write.
- ✦ If you have a useful example from similar interactions/requirements available, use it.
- ✦ Be appropriate – a written document/e-mail is not always the *correct* approach.
- ✦ THINK before you begin, but once you have started, especially on a long document, let it flow.
- ✦ When you are finished, stop. Business documents are judged on quality, not quantity.



## Review/Peer Review

You *must* review your document before it is despatched, and edit as necessary.

It is also very useful to get someone else to review it if you can.

If your organisation has a formal review process, find out about it and ensure you follow it.



## The Appearance – Printing and Publishing

In this electronic age, your audience may be reading your document on screen or in hard copy. You must ensure that it looks professional in both situations.



## E-mails



## THE DOCUMENTS



## Addressing your mails

- The To: line contains the people for whom the mail is intended.
- The CC: line can contain others for whom the e-mail content is of interest but who don't need to take any action.
- The BCC: line is used to 'blind copy' anybody else you need to send the mail to, where you do not want others to be aware of who has received copies, or where people want to keep their e-mail address private.



## Meeting Agendas

**The key information to be covered in an agenda is:**

- ❖ Why are we meeting, i.e. the purpose?
- ❖ Where are we meeting?
- ❖ When are we meeting? And for how long?
- ❖ Who will be there, ie other invitees?
- ❖ What are the topics/areas for discussion?
- ❖ Is any preparation required?
- ❖ Must I attend (am I an optional or a required attendee)?



## Briefness

E-mails are expected to be brief and succinct.

Ensure that the subject line explains what the mail is about – think of it as a title.





## Formality

You should adhere to the formality guidelines provided earlier.

This applies to language, abbreviations, salutations, tone etc.

Do not use the abbreviated language so common to phone messaging.



## Business Letters

Business letters are a critical communications mechanism for your organisation, both internally and externally.

**Business**



## Attachments

When attachments are provided, reference each of them in the mail itself.

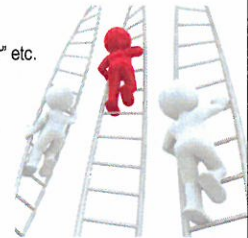
You should also explain to your recipients what you need them – each of them, if necessary – to do with the attachments, and by when.



## The Basic Structure

**A business letter typically contains the following:**

- ❖ Company's full name and address.
- ❖ Recipient's full name and address;
- ❖ Date of the letter;
- ❖ Formal Salutation e.g. "Dear Mr/Ms/Dr" etc.
- ❖ A Subject Heading.
- ❖ Letter Body.
- ❖ Formal Closing.
- ❖ Name and Signature of the Sender.
- ❖ Title of the Sender.



## Forwarding /replying

- ▶ Consider if you need to:
  - Reply to All, or only to the sender, or to a limited list of the original recipients.
  - Retain the full e-mail 'trail' – sometimes information is included in the history that is either not required or else counter-productive.
  - Start a brand new e-mail rather than continuing the current trail.



## Writing the Letter

**Tips on how to write a business letter:**

- Determine the purpose of your letter, and make it clear at the outset.
- Be courteous and diplomatic, even if it is a difficult or contentious topic.
- Remember that correct spelling, grammar and punctuation are always important.
- Tailor your letter so that it does not 'read' like a standard mail-shot.



## Reports

Reports form a large part of business writing. They typically contain detailed information. They may be a record of a particular event or the outcome of a departmental/project review.



## Business Cases

- A succinct statement of the problem/challenge/opportunity;
- Detailed supporting evidence as required (some of this could be in an appendix);
- Several possible solution options, with advantages and disadvantages;
- The impact of maintaining the status quo (this could be addressed as one of the options);
- The recommended option, including some detailed planning;
- Financial and non-financial benefits, and when they will start to flow;
- Potential costs and timeframes.



## Report Structure and format

- What this report is about;
- Why this report has been written;
- The approach taken to gather the content (if relevant, e.g. interviews, workshops, review of documentation);
- Main body, with detailed information as appropriate - facts, data, calculations, results;
- The findings and conclusions/recommendations as appropriate.



## General Documentation

Your company also produces many documents which are more general in nature.



## Business Cases

A business case is essentially an internal proposal. It seeks a commitment – usually funding – from the senior management of the organisation to address a specific challenge or opportunity.



## General Documentation

- Lists of requirements for a new system or process;
- Records of the proceedings of specific events;
- Lessons learned after a project;
- Documentation of business processes;
- Instructions;



## Wrapping Up

### Words from the Wise

**YOGI BERRA:** In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.

**DWIGHT EISENHOWER:** Plans are nothing; planning is everything.

